Amendments to the Specification:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 1, at line 12 with the following:

Currently, a datagram-based communications protocol known as the Simple

Network Management Protocol ("SNMP"), is implemented to perform network

management of vendor telecommunications equipment over long distances across local

area networks (LANs) and wide area networks (WANs). For example, in the system 10 as

shown in FIG. 1, many vendors 12 of a telecommunications carrier 15 (e.g.,

MCIWorldcom, assignee of the present invention) rely on SNMP communications to

manage their equipment across a LAN/WAN 20. Thus, a piece of equipment 13 may

generate a message about its operational state and this message may be communicated

via SNMP from the equipment to MCIWorldcom's network management software 16

across the network. In another example implementation, a network operation,

administrator or maintenance center, e.g., located in North Carolina, may be required to

provision switches remotely located across the country, e.g., in Texas, via a WAN.